

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3rd October 2022

Present: Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson in the Chair

Councillors Bayliss, Cronin, Desayrah, A. Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Laurenson, Norfolk (Vice-Chair), Piotrowski and Roberts

Officers: David Blake, Managing Director
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Duncan Rudge, Head of Planning
Rebecca Burridge, Planning Officer - Planning Policy

Also in Attendance:

Emily Barker, Strategic Planning & Environmental Policy Manager, Worcestershire County Council and Karen Hanchett, Transport Planning and Development Management Team Leader, Worcestershire County Council were in attendance remotely

17 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Piotrowski for Councillor Lewing, Councillor Roberts for Councillor Stanley.

18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Roberts declared an interest in items 20 - South Worcestershire Development Plan Review: Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) and 21 - South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (TTS DPD): Publication: Regulation 19 Stage as a member of Warndon Parish Council.

19 Public Participation

None.

20 South Worcestershire Development Plan Review: Publication Consultation (Regulation 19)

The Committee considered a report on proposals for the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review Publication (Regulation 19) consultation. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that this is the next stage in the SWDP Review process. The draft Plan which was proposed for consultation was appended to the report, and a substantial number of evidence studies, policies and technical assessments which support the Plan had been published online with the agenda.

The majority of these were in final form for Regulation 19 publication, with a small number being subject to final, minor updates. Also included in the Appendices was an easy-read summary leaflet in draft.

The Head of Planning gave a presentation on the key policies within the plan, the evidence base, the duty to co-operate, infrastructure deliverability and viability and the next steps.

Subject to approval by this Committee and by full Council on 17 October 2022, consultation would start when all three South Worcestershire Councils have agreed both the SWDPR and the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document for Regulation 19 Consultation.

Following the presentation, Officers responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- There is a strong emphasis on public transport and active travel in relation to the strategic sites identified in the Plan.
- The level of affordable housing will depend on whether a site is green field or brown field. With regard to viability, it is not always possible for the latter to be able to sustain the same level of affordable housing and developer contributions as green field sites in south Worcestershire. The balance will be tested at examination.
- The policy for employment sites in the Review will be much stronger than currently in terms of protecting existing sites.
- It was suggested that the need for 26k new homes could be articulated more clearly to the public in the summary document. Officers advised that the document is still in draft form and this can be addressed.
- Officers advised that the Worcester City Local Transport Strategy is still an emerging document and is not referenced in the Plan as a result. However, it will be cross-referenced in the future where relevant.
- The development of rail stations at Henwick Halt and Fernhill Heath has not been taken forward and these are not required to support the Plan.
- Reference was made to encouraging inclusive design in housebuilding to support sensory needs. Officers advised that this is not currently supported in the NPPF. The policy on design is intended to be broad-ranging. If national policy is introduced at a future stage, local policy can be developed as the Plan moves through the examination stage.
- In response to a question regarding connectivity for new urban developments, Officers clarified that all infrastructure providers have been contacted and Worcestershire County Council have clarified what is required in terms of issues such as highway improvements, passenger transport requirements and active travel provision.

- Questions were raised about the infrastructure funding gap. Officers advised that this is currently £116m. The total requirement currently is £851m and developers will be expected to contribute circa £690m. £44m of other funding sources has already been identified. Officers advised that this is a plan to 2041 and is it normal to have a gap at this stage. The shortfall lies mainly where there is currently uncertainty as to where the funding will come from. Specialist viability consultants had advised that they are satisfied with the Plan, however it is an ongoing piece of work and Officers acknowledged the validity of the points raised.
- Officers have actively engaged with all healthcare providers. Financial contributions have been requested to enhance and improve facilities at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, but at present it is not clear what is required and whether they meet the Regulations, discussions will be ongoing.

Committee Members expressed support for the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommend to the Council:

- 1. approval of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) Publication consultation (Regulation 19) set out in the Appendices, for consultation from 01 November 2022 for six weeks;**
- 2. that the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to make minor amendments to the SWDP Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) material prior to publication;**
- 3. subject to the outcome of the Regulation 19 Publication consultation raising no material issues of concern on the soundness of the Plan, that the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to make minor modifications and submit the SWDP Review for Examination, in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;**
- 4. as part of the Examination process, that the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to formally request that the appointed Inspector make recommendations to the Council for any main modifications to the SWDP Review that are considered necessary to make the Plan sound as per Regulation 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

21 South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (TTS DPD): Publication: Regulation 19 Stage

The Committee considered a report on the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) Publication: Regulation 19. The Head of Planning presented the report and explained that, whilst the SWDPR contains a policy for Travellers, it is the intention for this Travellers DPD to act as the primary policy function for new Traveller development. The DPD contains three policies, although there had been an extensive site search, no sites had been allocated in Worcester City.

In the ensuing discussion, it was explained that interviews had been undertaken with travellers and travelling showpeople themselves as part of the assessment of potential sites when preparing the DPD.

Committee Members expressed support for the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommend to the Council:

- 1. approval of the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document ("DPD") Publication: Regulation 19 set out at Appendix 1 for consultation from 01 November 2022 for six weeks;**
- 2. that the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to make minor amendments to the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document Publication: Regulation 19 material prior to publication;**
- 3. subject to the outcome of the Regulation 19 Publication consultation raising no material issues of concern on the soundness of the DPD, that the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to make minor modifications and submit the DPD for examination, in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and**
- 4. as part of the Examination process, that the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee be authorised to formally request that the appointed Inspector make recommendations to the Council for any main modifications to the DPD that are considered necessary to make the DPD sound as per Regulation 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

22 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 8.05p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
31st October 2022

This page is intentionally left blank